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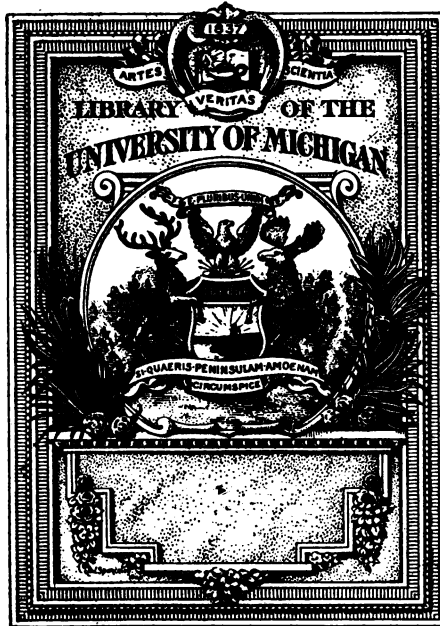
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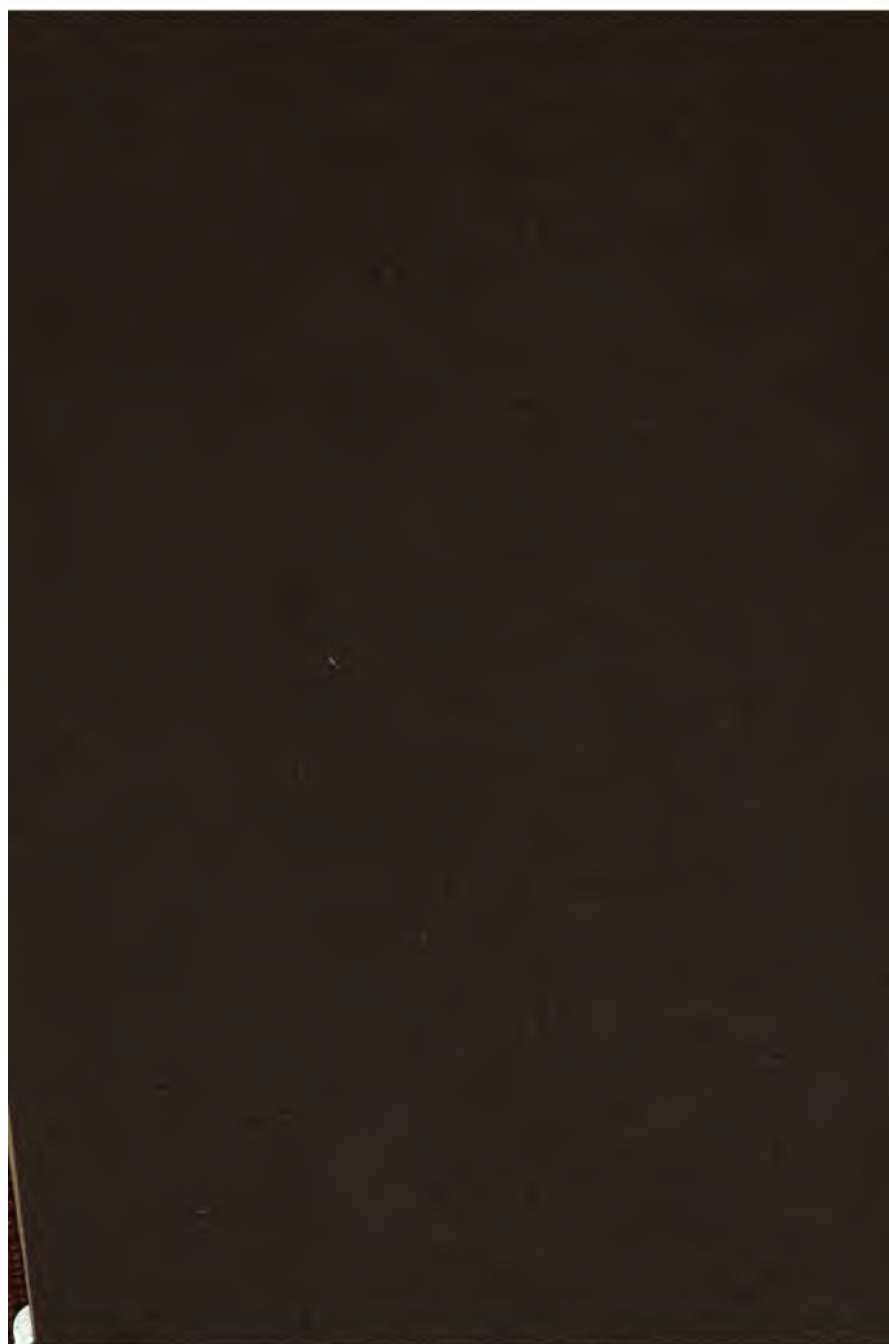
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TO LEDA AND OTHER ODES

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TO · LEDA · AND · OTHER · ODES  
BY · T. · STURGE · MOORE

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TO MICHAEL FIELD

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## ERRATA.

Page ix. Fifth line from foot, for "though" *read* "through."

Page xv. Eleventh line from top, for "templed courts" *read* "temple-courts."

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## TO LEDA

Wiseliest confirmed of river bathers, thou,  
Most nobly wooed of any god-loved queen,  
That oft didst swimming, like a snow-white plough,  
The swiftest crystal furrow, then didst lean,  
A panting majesty, on willow arms  
Which, yielding, cradled thee, while all thy charms  
Lay, open-bloomed, beneath the eye of heaven ;  
Thus lapped serene, through many a summer even,  
Consenting to the silence, thou wast seen—

Not only of white swans and cygnets gray,  
Dove-coloured cygnets, swans of arching pride  
That passed thee in abstraction ; clouds of day  
Sail azure as such birds o'er waters glide,  
And clouds will no more pause near kings' fair homes,—  
Though queens watch at the casements while their combs  
Gleam indolently drawn through perfumed tresses—  
Than those swans loitered ; tell me ! had thy guesses  
Soared trembling towards Olympus, wonder-eyed ?

Frail though the empyrean, hadst thou sent  
Some fond surmise ?  
Or had conjecture, with mere swans content,  
In fowler wise  
Stolen on islet lone

Girt with its bullrush zone?  
Watched some proud mother warm her nest,  
Or strike her tardy eggs?  
Watched the soft cygnets quaintly test  
Freedom on doubtful legs?  
Watched, by an odd bright notion madly caught,  
Stout babies break from shells,  
And, hooded under fragile domes, make sport,  
Like bees from flower bells?

Not virtues, that the sweetest sins forego,  
Envy thee sadly ; nay, thou dost not blanch  
Their cheeks with base regret ; for they can glow  
With joy, to watch thee, on rose-laurel branch,  
Hang thy gold belt of weight to stoop pink blooms  
And make them kiss themselves in water glooms ;  
Thy royal robe against the trunk suspended,  
Loose then thy locks and vests ; for, these descended,  
Thy beauty all the joy of light assumes :

Thou being hence, here, with enquiring hops  
The robin ventures, perks with knowing look  
His shrewd small eye, still draweth nigh, still stops ;  
Thy picture-broidered train might be a book,  
And he a child enacting someone wise ;  
Soon hither, too, the bright kingfisher flies ;

x

.A.M.O.L.

His glance demands how gemmy-gauds are fashioned ;  
On thy return both vanished ;—then, impassioned,  
Burst in the imperial swan with ardent eyes :

O beautiful white woman, that white bird,  
Embraced ere long,  
Made rapturous music and was nobly stirred  
To wondrous song ;  
Note surging through his throat  
On modulated note,—  
Sounds unsealing worlds of bliss,  
Dream-hallowed, sunset-flushed,—  
Sounds more melting than a kiss  
Received on midnight hushed,—  
Sounds that made thee know, Troy must be burned,  
Helen be loved and blamed ;  
Ay, distant, 'neath thy closed lids, were discerned  
Those shriek-pulsed towers that flamed :

Yet never, never, if the pain waxed shrewd  
(Though in a vaster pleasure wholly merged)  
Would thy great lover let remorse intrude  
Upon that bliss, that like an anguish surged  
Beneath his ardour, as beneath the blast  
Swoll'n ocean in tall waves runs high and fast ;  
Oh, never had a pale regret permission

To slow interpret to thy soul each vision  
That flashed like summer lightning, flashed and past !

Forbidden loves are sweet to human hearts,  
And, would but spare Necessity consent,  
They might ennoble ; sanction she imparts  
Was ne'er to any other woman lent :  
Thy heart alone felt shame dissolve away  
In pleasure limpid as the dawn of day ;  
Beauty, unhumbled by the cold next morning,  
Rash impulse thou createdst brought adorning  
And like a bridegroom wrapped thee from dismay :

Delicious down of pulsing throat and breast  
Thine arms have known ;  
Thy fanned heart all the power of wings confessed,  
Wings that had flown  
Where thy dazed thoughts ne'er dared ;  
In bliss then thine, hath shared  
Strength, that had churned the river white  
Behind the mightiest swan ;  
Strength, that was sudden like the light  
That reddens day-break wan ;  
Strength thou couldst no more question or forbid,  
Than struggle of thine might check  
When, round thy shoulders, through thy tresses, glid  
That amorous god-like neck.

**SUGGESTED BY THE REPRESENTATION ON A GRECIAN  
AMPHORA OF A WINGED AND ADOLESCENT EROS  
SEEKING TO CATCH A RABBIT IN A SCARF**

Whirr! and the dread wings flap;  
Scamper! the rabbit flies  
Down the branched lanes like a streak!  
Eyes he but the prickly hoops,  
In covert furze some tunnelled gap,  
He hears those pinions flap  
As they poise that trenchant beak;  
In his heart the venture dies,  
And headlong on he flies,—  
Bolts, and the buzzard stoops,  
Swerves, and the buzzard swoops,  
Checks, and those dark wings flap.

Swift in the liquid light,  
Steering between the furze,  
Down the rough and hummocked slopes,  
Skirting briery clumps of fern,  
Brown and red-brown and jetty bright,  
With dire reserve of might  
Tracking those panic hopes,  
Forward the buzzard skirrs,  
Intently threads the furze,  
Veers with the rabbit's turn,

Dogs, and keeps close astern,  
Cheered by that reckless flight.

Love, on like wings, in chase  
Held a like timid harmless prey ;—  
Young, in his teens, with beardless face,  
His body lithe, direct and slant  
And smooth as the glossy rich display  
On arrowy buzzard's form ;—but Love,  
Sailing the warren close above,  
The white-tailed scurryer all apart  
Sought not with talon or with beak  
To strike, but in a scarf did seek  
To trap his timid quarry ;  
And after helter-skelter race,  
In victory did close the chase,  
And caught his panting quarry.

—Not as when plunged beak joys  
Eyeless the rabbit bleeds,  
While his quivering ends in death ;  
When detaches here and there  
The handsome bird a morsel choice ;  
When a strange proud noise  
Making, at times he heeds  
The distance, where the breath  
xiv.

Of August stirs the heath ;  
Dreams, and is keen and fair,  
And as that desert air  
Seems staidly to rejoice :—

Love with soft silk doth blind  
His prey, and thus transports  
Far to hutch of white pine wood  
Closed by latch of orichalch,  
A hutch where he shall to his mind  
Straw, oats, and parsley find  
And gaze o'er templed courts  
Round which doves coo and brood,  
Where in their tender mood  
White-handed Graces walk,  
Pause, stroke his fur and talk  
To him with voices kind.

Soul, thou art caught by Love  
After such chase, such pangs ; so blind  
With darkness round, beneath, above,  
Transported to like quiet shrine ;  
Which far more wondrous thou shalt find  
Than freedom's rugged wilderness.  
There thou may'st watch in dainty dress  
Virtues and Graces that combine,

Not only with soft-sounding word,  
But converse understood when heard,  
To raise thee up to glory ;  
And, if thou follow as they lead,  
Their patience will ere long indeed  
Have raised thee nigh to glory.

Taught are the wild and free,  
The warren is their school ;  
Hazard, fate, the hawk, mishap  
Teach them, bringing home the truth ;  
Death at their doors they daily see,  
They learn or cease to be :  
Such as do never nap  
Grow old and strong and rule :  
They dub who is caught a fool,  
Age and forget their youth,  
Hold, though with scanty proof,  
Their life the best that may be.

Love, and they see thee too !  
Flee from thee, crouch or hide !  
Beauty, youth and power and joy,  
Golden curls that please the winds,  
Naked perfection, wings that outdo  
In power the kite's, in hue  
xvi.



The Halcyon's! Their minds  
Are Fear's, not theirs—they hide  
From eyes, in which to confide  
Meaneth life shall be joy!  
They see thee, half man, half boy,  
Unbewitched they thy beauty view

Thy house they have never seen :  
Its covered courts are paved with tiles,  
The open ones with grass are green ;  
While, indoor water's channell'd speech  
The music-loving ear beguiles.  
Psyche, thy bride, thy sisters three,  
The Graces and that mother of thee,  
Beauty divine,—these all and each,  
With the seven kirtled Virtues, tell  
(Holding the rapt soul in a spell)  
Thy captives many a story  
Of great example and great grace—  
Of lovers, who all fear did face,  
And died, but live in story.

## A LAMENT FOR ORPHEUS

This is his head, O women ; see these lips  
Still now for ever,—  
Lips, that persistently were dumb so long,  
And, pinched together,  
Refused our supplication that sweet song,  
Which, in days never to return, did charm  
Gaunt oaks of stubborn growth, stooping to hearken ;  
And pines, whose tall throngs earnest broodings darken,  
Of their austere aloofness did disarm ;  
While every savage dweller in the forest,  
(Like moon-struck lovers when their pain is sorest)  
Followed him gentle, followed him in tears ;  
Lions with shaggy mane brushed past his knees ;  
And leopards silent paced with spell-bound ears,  
And eyes that could not from fond worship cease ;  
With honey-loving tongue huge bears caressed  
His white unsandalled feet,  
Which trod those paths our childhood followed in,  
Drawn on by reverence meet.  
So well the aim of living he expressed,  
His lute such escort everywhere could win.

O women, look ; I part these heavy curls,  
To show ye those fair portals where our prayers  
Clamoured in vain ; these blood-damped heavy curls,  
xviii.

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To show ye shell-like mouldings, where, fond girls,  
Your love was foiled and fainted ;  
Oh, with his soon-to-wither beauty, now  
Be thoroughly acquainted  
While yet Death opportunity allow !  
Brief, brief, the stay of sweet looks after death !  
See, see, how thickly  
The blood drops from the severed neck beneath,  
While cheeks, waned sickly,  
Foretell a ghastness which we dare not face.  
Fast closes in our fortune's narrow space ;  
Yea, all our fortune rests with this pale mien,  
Austere no longer,  
Where sorrow fenced herself, and brooding teen  
Than life's hope stronger :  
As rock, ringed by fair flowers, harsh and stern,  
Such marble grief dismayed our blushful leaguer  
Who camped about his feet, frail, wistful, eager,  
And, hearkening, mute like flowers, could discern  
A sound of tears within his riven frame.

He inly wept and heeded not our woe ;  
His heart was weeping :  
Like shadows of swift birds that passed above,  
Or thoughts expressed from under features sleeping,  
His sighs across our smiling patience came,

Or, traversing our hearts, confused our lips ;  
Meanwhile, from all and each youth's glory slips,  
Unheeded melts, as from bloom's petalled head  
Its diadem of dew ; or idly drips,  
Spilled out from languid chalices of gold.  
Was his heart cold ?  
We never dreamed it : no, he loved the dead,  
Preferred her to the living ; and was live  
As is the ash-heap's treasured core of red,  
Which waits all day the wood-cutter's return  
Within his hut, and, when he fans, will burn  
And make his cabin glow, his comfort thrive ;  
So shall, life's day once closed, that long-mourned love  
Find her lost comfort cheer the night below :  
" Eurydice " we heard him sigh her name ;  
It sought the soft vast dome of blue above  
Dove-winged, but shadowed us with raven woe.

Then from our smouldering hearts leaped forth the flame ;  
Who knows what far-off echoes heard our cries,  
And mocked them round their lonesome upland glen,  
Repeating yells of frenzy, thinned in tone,  
From passive wall to passive wall of stone ?  
Who knows what leisured eagles, through the skies,  
In idle wonder, quit rock perches then ?—  
O Zeus, that madest, hast thou seen thy work

Mar its own beauty, ignorantly, blindly,  
Untaught, unwarned, unreasoned with, unkindly  
Dowered with liberty? or dost thou shirk  
All care and thy deed's outcome leave to fate?  
Or is our weakness tortured by thy hate?—

As the wind takes the forest, passion took  
Our arms and hair, and all our being shook :  
Like ships that, at the flood-tide, from their ranks  
A tempest launches off steep shingle banks,  
Sails drenched and water-logged,  
We heaved upon the swell of black emotion,  
At mercy of a rude remorseless ocean.  
Like swimmers, seaweed-clogged,  
Then felt our beauty fail and overstrain ;  
Our grace and our resistance were annulled :  
Our souls like bind-weed bells, draggled with rain,  
Swung to the blast,  
The glory of white youth completely dulled,  
Forever past.

This river seeks eternally the sea,  
As youth unwitting to salt sorrow flows.—  
Bright waves, whose keen pursuit of destiny  
Draws all our bloodstained thoughts the way it goes,  
Accept of what bereaves us, this fair head :  
We overdrove our hopes and weep them dead.—

We murdered him, O women, and our guilt  
Is, as the ravenous sea, insatiate ;  
All our good will to come, all thoughts elate  
Shall be as jars of honey vainly spilt,  
To sweeten that salt main.

Down, down this stream, speed on, thou fair head, flo  
Past iris beds and king-cups less worth noting  
Than were our smiles ; retain  
That cold indifferent aspect, those drooped lids  
Where'er thou wendest ; whether Nereus bids  
Thee welcome, o'er some jasper threshold borne ;  
Or lank and shipwrecked sailors, under crags  
Crouched round their drift-wood blaze, behold  
Thy beauty up-turned in the surf forlorn ;  
Or, thou (where, fishing over billows grey,  
On pinion slow, some lonely seamew lags  
Till the moon rise) athwart the wan ray rolled,  
To feast on thee, her weary wings upfold ;—  
Nay, rather, to brown-footed fisher maiden  
Shall soft foam sweep up whispering, with thee laden  
And thy face meet with innocent tears at last.  
Our part with thee is played and of the past ;  
Nor is there rugged darkness deep in caves,  
Wherein the life of youth-resembling waves  
Is broken, half so cruel as the thought  
That our hearts loathe the deed our hands have wrought.

## A LAMENT RE-ECHOED

That noble stag, the leader of the herd,  
Lies pierced upon the heights :  
Who, then, can say a word?—  
Let dumb does cry, let frail fawns bleat, since night's  
Un-eared, responseless silence wounds them not :  
Have they conceived of *Pity* to improve their lot?

How are the mighty fallen? by what chance?  
Where now is honour gone?  
O tell it not in Gath! Publish it not  
In streets of Askelon!  
Lest daughters of the Philistine rejoice,  
Lest they for gladness dance  
(The daughters of uncircumcised men),  
And give their triumph voice :  
Who could bear comfort then?

O let there not on you be dew again,  
Ye mountains of Gilboa. No ;  
Never let there be rain  
Upon your lofty fields, where yearly go  
Tribes purified, and there a clamour raise  
Around the sacrifice, undaunted praise  
That need not stint to shout :—it shall be so  
No more ; for there  
The mighty left their shields—for there, alas,

The shield of Saul was vilely cast away,  
As though he ne'er  
Had been with oil anointed :—nay,  
Let spring there no more grass ;  
Suffer not there to fall  
By night the dew, nor any rain by day ;  
There let no flocks or shepherds henceforth stray :  
But be they barren all,  
Thy tops, Gilboa, mournful and not gay :—  
Who shall praise beauty now, since this has come to pass?

Never the bow of Jonathan grew slack,  
Never the sword of Saul was carried back  
Save crimsoned with the blood of foes left dead,  
Save on the flesh of warriors fully fed :  
Yet, in one day, both son and father perished !—  
Saul was, of Jonathan, beloved and cherished ;  
Division had no portion in their lives  
And found none in their death : less honour strives,  
Less honour : both were lovely, both are dead.

Oh pleasant in their lives, lovely were they !  
More rapid were they than grown eagles—yea,  
Stronger were they than lions !—Maidens all,  
Daughters of Israël, weep ye for Saul !  
For he it was who clothed you, from of old,



In scarlet with other delights.  
Had your apparel ornaments of gold?  
They were won from armed Canaanites.—  
Lament ye, weep, and wail;  
What sweet word addeth comfort to a tale  
Which speechlessly tears can tell:  
Though the shedding of tears it is well,  
Yet, O ye maidens, let it not be all;  
Sing with your loftiest passion songs for Saul.

How have the mighty fallen!—At what place  
Did they from out the battle drop? Tell me,  
Doth Jonathan lie pierced upon the hills?  
Come, lead me thither, I would see his face,  
E'en add one other evil to my ills.—

Ah! this indeed is he!

I am distressed for thy sake, O my brother;  
Thou, Jonathan, hast more than any other  
Been pleasant unto me:  
What is left to *me* then?  
Wonderful love was thine,  
Passing that of women even,  
And all that love was mine.  
Who loving after this shall deem he doeth well?

**Who knoweth who rejoiced when my love stricken fell?**

**How are the mighty fallen! How are they broken,  
Those swords of the battle!—Rend we for a token  
Our garments, cast dust on each head for a sign  
That they are dead, that even those have perished  
Whom most our hearts had cherished.—**

**Ah God, whose god seems strongest to the Philistine?**

## ON DEATH

Why question what my thoughts of death may be?  
 Behold 'tis Autumn—in yon poplar mass,  
 Whose green ripples to silver breezily,  
 Dangle pale yellow leaves like lemons large;  
 And lo! beyond there! what has come to pass?  
 Suave haze and sunshine from its utmost marge  
 Have taken London to their mighty keeping,  
 Which, self-forgetful, smiles in glory sleeping:  
 And here hath she flown down whom children charge  
 “Fly away home”—and busily is creeping  
 “Scurrying carnelian on my sleeve.—  
 Lady-bird, begone;  
 Ye men forebode; stay, thou wilt ne'er believe,  
 Nor spoil glad hours whilst yet their sands run on.

Self-questioned ignorance yields no reply;  
 And thus there grows an aching in our ear  
 Which stir of insect wings can magnify  
 And hear whole flights of angels oar their vans—  
 Nothing is silent when the heart will hear;  
 All echoes, answers; yet the thought is man's,  
 Not a new thought, brings not new knowledge, never  
 Breaks on the silence where his brain dwells ever,  
 Nor peoples that vast night the mind's eye scans,  
 Nor can prized beauties from what pains love sever.—

Wise, heartless, Lady Bird, hear thou, thy home  
Is burnt, thy children flown ;  
Yet be not less industrious to roam  
The infant's hand, who makes such harsh things known.

When to the mightiest man death did draw near,  
He shut himself within his bathing hall  
And lent to his great admiral his ear ;  
Who told of voyage on the Indian main,  
The first by Grecian captains dared—that all  
The glamour of unconquered seas might reign  
Over the greatest conqueror's spirit failing.  
By the bath-side, he, picturing them sailing,  
Was as he had been in his youth again,  
Conversed of conquest nigh as when unailing,  
And pleased his captains ; yet grew worse once more,  
Soon in a deep trance sank ;  
His anxious Macedonians at the door,  
Then would not be gainsaid, but, rank by rank,

In single file, were ushered past his bed.  
His Indian and Egyptian veterans  
Passed mute, were satisfied he was not dead ;  
Unarmed they passed and many a tear let fall ;  
Man, he had won more than had erst been man's  
Till each owned him the embodied soul of all :—  
xxviii.

And lo! they saw him vanquished, helpless, dying;  
So childishly their hearts were in them crying.  
He no more moved, nor for one friend did call,  
Yet two days lay, as all had seen him lying;  
Then on the tenth day of his fever, on  
The twenty-eighth of June,  
Died; and from what vast schemes the life was gone,  
Which up and down far lands like wrecks lay strewn!

His end was beautiful, though from vile cause—  
A surfeit at a feast—his fever came.  
Alaric's grave likewise commands applause  
Though he sacked Rome and Italy trod under:  
His captives, by those careful of his fame,  
Were forced to turn Calabrian torrent's thunder  
And in the dry bed delve a sepulchre,  
And house his trophies and his ashes there:  
But when the stream, which their hard toil did sunder,  
Resumed his haughty course, then all they were  
Slaughtered in thousands on his rocky shores,  
That what they knew might be  
Kept by their lips, as by his thund'rous roar's  
Blank bellow, secret to eternity.

“The morning after Goethe's death I yearned  
To look upon his well-known form once more.”

So writes that friend who to his house returned.  
"Stretched on his back he seemed to sleep, while, fraught  
With peace, profound security reigned o'er  
His mien : that grand brow still might harbour thought !  
By one white sheet the naked form was hidden :  
Large lumps of ice lay round it ; then, unbidden,  
His man the linen from the body caught,  
And laid bare what since eighty years was hidden ;  
I was astounded—so magnificent  
The limbs, the breast's broad slant  
Was arched and powerful, the arms and thighs unspent  
And muscular, the feet were elegant !

Nowhere was any trace of fat, and none  
Of leanness or decay ; a perfect man  
In all his beauty lay before me ; one  
Moment, enraptured at the sight, might I  
Forget that blood therein no longer ran :  
And on his breast my thoughtless hand might lie  
Ere me to horror stillness could awaken ;  
But then I turned away, by sobs rude-shaken,  
And gave free course to tears." Ah, wrought so high,  
We, our revered or cherished from us taken,  
By eloquent grief's passion rapt, may deem  
That beauty finds in death  
Merest defeat ; yet sometimes tombs will seem

xxx.

To echo angel voices, hoard swung-censer's breath.

'Tis known how on her bridal morn one died ;  
Greatly beloved, most beautiful and young,  
She lay there ; on the white quilt in their pride  
Flowers were strewn, fresh opened, scented, glowing !  
Purple anemones together flung  
With crimson pheasant-eyes ; one hand unknowing  
Oppressed green mignonette ; the other fern  
Embowered ; near, forget-me-nots did yearn  
Neath poppies crushed ; like mimic sconces blowing,  
Orange set her brow round with lamps to burn.  
While, stricken, her poor bridegroom, hour by hour,  
Tear-blind, stared at her face.  
Yet calmed by beauty, awed by sovran power,  
One could have thanked death, though one dared not praise.

Such scenes concern but us who linger here ;  
What their own death was to themselves none knows.  
Heard they our wailing, as the insect's ear  
Lists to the children's chaunt, a mere vague sound,  
While calmly she, since life within her glows,  
Is on her present occupation bound ?  
Though all death's dreaded pain and hoped-for glory  
Be nursed of us as children hug a story,  
E'en croon one o'er the beetle they have found,

**(Fair lie old snows upon the mountains hoary)  
Imagination must teach us to die,  
Must age and death enhance  
And give to both a value clear and high :—  
Or fail and leave us to blank ignorance.**



## TO LOKI

Cease, thou art terrible! Cease, thou tireless god;  
No purpose doth thy crude, brief laugh declare;  
Thy beauty charms the less, for being odd;  
Thy skin is bronzed, like red flame flaps thy hair:  
Shalt thou attract the would-be-self-possessed?  
Oh, thou art young forever, there it lies;  
Bewilder me forever with thy mocking eyes!

Thrall me! what though thy laugh ring hollow? Stay  
Those limbs from dancing! Hover lower,  
From off those sulphurous rocks thy feet leave grey  
In spots like aged lichen patches! Slower;  
Mine eyes ache following thy yellow vest  
Which crisps and curdles round hips, neck and shoulder  
While, lightning-like, it streams from boulder to boulder!

—Leaps as, from desert snow,  
That ice-plough cleaves beneath the spangled night,  
When clearest wind doth blow,  
Flash and fly up those brandished spears of light,—  
They hopping twang or crack with zest,  
While the white bear facing north,  
The silken blue-fox stealing forth,  
Blinking seal in furry vest,  
And the thick muffled Laplander,  
Gaze and wonder at the stir!



Is it happy warriors dancing,  
Fire-light on their gay spears glancing?  
Is it gods, or demon sprites,  
Or shooting thoughts of summer nights,  
Like pangs that torpid flesh contains,  
Thrilling Winter's ice-locked brains?  
No, for it is thee and thine,  
Who plans of men and gods do plot to countermine.

Volcanic nature, passionless desire,  
Divine mobility, intuitive  
Touchstone of qualities,—enter, thou Fire,  
Enter our life once more,—force us to live!  
May I encounter thee in some long lane,  
A gipsy with stained garments on thy back,  
With toys and charms, and songs bedizening thy pack!

Let weeds with wicked smells, as fumitory,  
Make smart the shattered ruin of thy hat;  
And, volubly persistent with thy story,  
Trap me with hints, and like a wary cat  
Let me believe escape were not in vain;  
Then make me feel, how fond man's thought to rest  
When none but active thought fulfils the soul's behest;

And of that ship tell me  
Which storms, which fogs, which calms, which bergs of ice,  
xxxiv.

NOU

No danger of the sea,  
Can wholly wreck ; that still its voyage plies,  
Righted, after each mischance,  
By an old but nimble crew,  
Lovers of green, salt, and blue,  
That have oft, with fiery glance,  
Watched the ice-floe's closing jars,  
And have steered by astral stars,  
Known Newfoundland's milk-white gloom,  
Mirage through hot hazes loom,  
Noontide darked by clouds of birds  
And large fishes utter words.  
Garbs of many climes they wear,  
Hoary unkempt beards and hair,  
Wiry comrades proved of thine  
Dauntless like thee, though old, they have like eyes that  
shine.

Life is not vain, I know it ; I am thine,  
O Loki, thine to teach or to betray ;  
Thy treacheries are punishments condign :  
Cheat me, and laugh ; be cruel the god's way ;  
Get hungry lips with vivid truth-like lies,  
Then grant them speech with lords and harlots grand ;  
Whose hearts shall faint and leap like birds held in the  
hand !

Than pity more sensitive to bridle thought !  
No eyes, like thine, foresee the course of Change,  
As, step by step, with Time, followed by nought,  
She passes, and still is : endlessly strange,  
Enamouring speech until with thee it vies,  
Thou patronizest thieves who keep their bad lives jolly,  
And wags who pilfer seers, in wisdom to deck folly.

Content thou dost abhor :  
The gods were happy once, and joyed their fill ;  
Those days on thee lay sore ;  
Thou lovely Balder by their hands didst kill.  
Beauty to win back from Death,  
Sadly turned they then to toil,  
Labourers in obdurate soil ;  
But more freely came thy breath,  
And more nimbly worked thy wit ;  
Oftener then, thy travel kit  
Donned, thou wentest singing forth,  
East, or west, or south, or north ;  
Every homestead knew thee then,  
Humoured, railed upon, by men,  
Mischievous Lob, or lanthorn Jack,  
Fiend upon the grumbler's back,  
Thou wast ours ; but we are thine  
By halves at most, ha ha ! Thou art but half divine !  
xxxvi.

**FOR DARK DAYS**

Ah, when a fair day finds me cold to it  
Who should be friendlier far,  
Or when the night seems too august, so lit  
With tranquil star on star ;

They ban unworthy every thought of mine,  
That once seemed symbols meant  
To help my sense express my soul and shine  
Equal to that event

Which any hour creation thrusts on man,  
Who inattentive, weak,  
Feels the vast spectacle surpass his will  
Which would respond to it, and sometimes can  
Find thoughts as grand, as beautiful, and fill  
As though a voice did speak  
Ocean, sky, cloud-land, valley, plain and hill ;

Then, then, abhorrent, wasted human life,  
All life of beast and pest  
Maintained by rapine, lust, and strife,  
I hate and would arrest :

Stay thou to multiply thy cruel wealth ;  
And cease thou to cajole,

Stealing from that young girl her thoughtless health,  
Her joy and self-control ;

Thou tiger, leave defenceless herds alone ;  
Thou shark, submit to law ;  
'Tis your example circumscribes my thought.  
Collusion with your ruthless greed has thrown  
So strong a spell that now my mind is brought  
To horror down from awe,  
And all I find doth mock all I have sought.

Oh, it is nothing that a day is fair,  
If life cannot be sweet !  
If souls cannot be lovers, and if care  
School not desire's feet !

If always generations generations breed,  
And race give place to race  
Sapped by inadequacy, doomed to bleed  
And, dying, pine for grace !

Only if fact can answer reason's prayer  
Both in one life and all,  
And in resultant beauty souls be good ;  
Only if towards that goal each day we fare,  
And never stand below where we have stood  
xxviii.

Answer I to your call,  
Ye stars, or yours, ye flowers of field and wood.

Yet is all vain? vain then this sad surmise ;  
For still unknown our doom ;  
Yet we have fancies, can enchant our eyes,  
Paint bliss upon the gloom ;

We have some strength, though it be not enough  
The vast whole to transform ;  
It can spread lawns where yet the waste is rough,  
Some blossom shield from storm ;

Our strength can make fair skies its harvest fields,  
And glean from cloud and star ;  
The grace of trees, the calm of distant hills  
Garner, and add what every flower yields  
To feed a beauty and a light that fills  
Our eyes, when those eyes are  
Glad to see other eyes forget life's ills.

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